

A Letter from the Commander



Throughout my career I've had countless opportunities to receive feedback from people who have enjoyed performances by The United States Air Force Band. As I reflect upon this, I find in most cases the first and lasting impression people get is of the amazing musicianship and world-class talent demonstrated by The Band. While this reaction, I'm proud to say, is right on target, I know there is an even greater impact that our organization has on the nation, the Air Force and the

community. I would like to share two examples that serve to underscore this thought.

I recently had the pleasure of attending a reception at the Japanese embassy following a performance by the Concert Band and Singing Sergeants. During the evening's festivities, the ambassador from Japan exclaimed to USAF Chief of Staff General Michael E. Ryan, "If The U.S. Air Force Band is this good, then how good are its pilots?" Wow! This striking example proves conclusively that The USAF Band communicates directly to our nation's friends and allies, as well as potential aggressors, that the United States Air Force is indeed the world's most powerful air and space force—one to be respected and one to be feared.

A letter I received a few weeks ago also shows this impact. A man, whose son is considering a career in the Air Force, wrote, "...I was struck by the energy and enthusiasm that was displayed by your corps. Their voices and faces demonstrated pride in themselves, their uniforms, their comrades and their country.

In short, I was 'blown away' by The Air Force Band. My teenager stepped out of Constitution Hall and said, 'that was amazing!'" The USAF Band is uniquely equipped to make this powerful impression on the American people. Mothers and fathers with children deployed around the world, often in harm's way, are assured that their precious loved ones belong to a highly professional force that is committed to excellence. Likewise, our brightest young people are inspired to seek out and join the Air Force team, serve their country and aspire to high ideals as demonstrated by The USAF Band.

As professional musicians, we constantly strive to reach the pinnacle of skill and artistic expression in our craft. We know that our product has the ability to communicate to people universally—crossing every national border, cultural boundary and language barrier. As professional airmen, our craft becomes a powerful tool to send global messages of strength, patriotism, service, commitment and excellence. When we proudly appear in our blue uniform, surrounded by national and Air Force symbols, we not only embody each of these values, but we project them to all who see and hear us. Ten years ago, Air Force Chief of Staff Larry D. Welch acknowledged this impact when he said, "...in my opinion, The United States Air Force Band is the most potent peacetime weapon in the United States Air Force arsenal." That is truly a high standard to live up to, but it is a challenge and responsibility that we are proud to accept each day.

Lowell E. Graham, Colonel, USAF
Commander and Conductor

The Singing Sergeants

Summer is well underway, and the Singing Sergeants are excited to be making music under the evening sky in our nation's capital. As you may recall, the chorus was on the road for 21 days in May with the Concert Band as part of our spring tour. As always, audiences were wholly appreciative of the patriotism and musicality shown by all those on stage. It is always such a special joy for us as performers to see the impact made on the attendees of our concerts. One of the highlights at the end of each night's program was a tribute to our veterans with our *Armed Services Medley*. We want them to know we'll never forget what they've done for our country! While we were on our spring tour, TSgt Brian Davis completed six weeks of training at the Noncommissioned Officer Academy in Florida. Congratulations, Brian!

Coming up soon, the Stars and Stripes will wave as the Singing Sergeants and Concert Band perform their annual Independence Day concert on the north terrace of the National Air and Space Museum on July 4. If you've not been to the Mall on this historic day, you're missing an evening chock-full of entertainment. Bring a picnic, enjoy the concert and stay for the awe-inspiring fireworks display. For more details about the concert, simulcast on WGMS 103.5 FM radio, refer to page 5 of *Cadenza*.

The Singing Sergeants will join the Concert Band as the Summer Concert Series continues through the end of August. Check the calendar for all the details!

—TSgt Janice Reksten Carl